



EXPLORING PERSONAL CONNECTIONS IN AN INCREASINGLY DIGITAL READING ENVIRONMENT

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IT'S ALL ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP

- Identifying how a patron connects with resources is an essential aspect of academic librarianship, especially with the onslaught of digital technologies.





- Are there ways in which patrons connect with digital reading materials?
- How are these connections manifested?
- Does the corporeal aspect still play an important role in the discussion of connection in a digital environment?



OVERVIEW

- Problem Statement
- Research Questions & Objectives
- Literature Review
- Interview Process
- Results
 - Comprehension
 - Lost (in the reading)
 - Willingness to Adapt
 - Sentimentality
 - Social Interaction
 - Space Matters
- Conclusion



The Problem



LIBRARY TRENDS

Less of this



More of this



GRAPPLING WITH CHANGING LEARNING STYLES

ACRL Standards for Libraries in Higher Education

“Libraries are the intellectual commons where users interact with ideas in both physical and virtual environments to expand learning and facilitate the creation of new knowledge.”

<http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/standardslibraries>

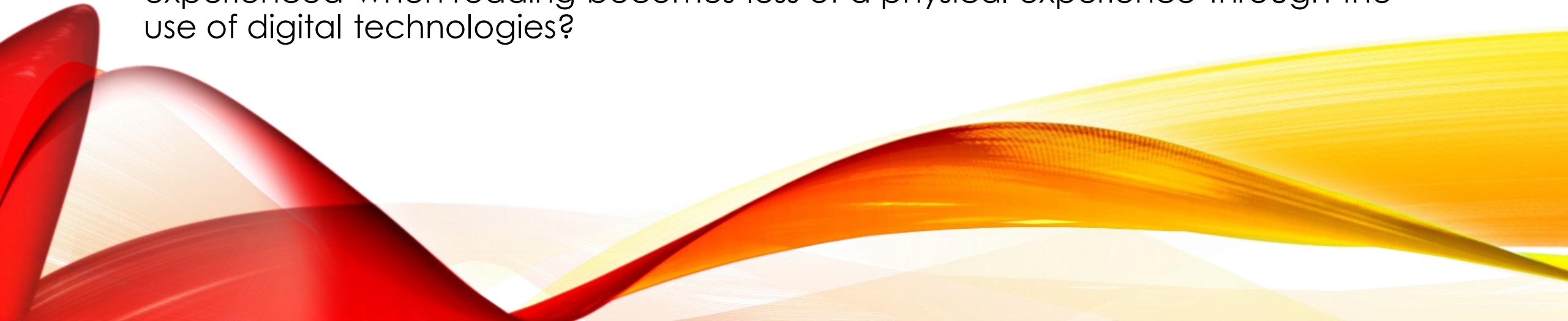


<http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends>

“ [THE] INSTITUTIONAL AIMS OF THE MODERN LIBRARY HAVE BEEN TO EXCLUDE THE BODY FROM THE SITE OF READING, TO MAKE A...PURELY MENTAL EXPERIENCE, A PROCESS THAT WILL ONLY ACCELERATE IN THE FUTURE WITH THE INCREASING IN-CORPOREALITY OF THE ELECTRONIC WORD. ”

Michael Camille, 1997, p.40

What is the importance of the body in relation to reading and the differences experienced when reading becomes less of a physical experience through the use of digital technologies?



RESEARCH QUESTIONS & OBJECTIVES

Questions

1. How do readers express feelings of connection with their texts in print and digital environments
2. How can library spaces be designed to elicit and support these feelings of connection?

Objectives

- Search for examples of connection manifested in participant responses (e.g. nostalgia or sentimentality, anthropomorphism/personification, the building of collections, fan participations, etc.)
- Discover whether tangible, corporeal aspects, such as touch, still play a role in a digital reading environment

LITERATURE REVIEW – BACKGROUND & THEORY

- Libraries and Book/Body Connection
- Bibliophiles
- Anthropomorphism
- Convergence Theory
- Transactional Theory



METHOD

- Qualitative, phenomenological approach
 - Studying lived experiences
 - No correct answer when dealing with feelings or attachments
- Examples of connection to watch for:
 - Sentimentality / Nostalgia
 - Participation
 - Item Collecting
 - Anthropomorphism



INTERVIEW PROCESS

- **11 interviews**

- Personal one-on-one setting
- 45 – 60 minute session
- Open ended questions:
 - Do you enjoy reading? Why or why not?
 - What type of reading do you take part in on a daily basis?
 - Tell me about your favorite book; would you consider reading it as an e-book? Why or why not?
 - Are there other particular books, pdfs or e-books you refer back to time after time? Why

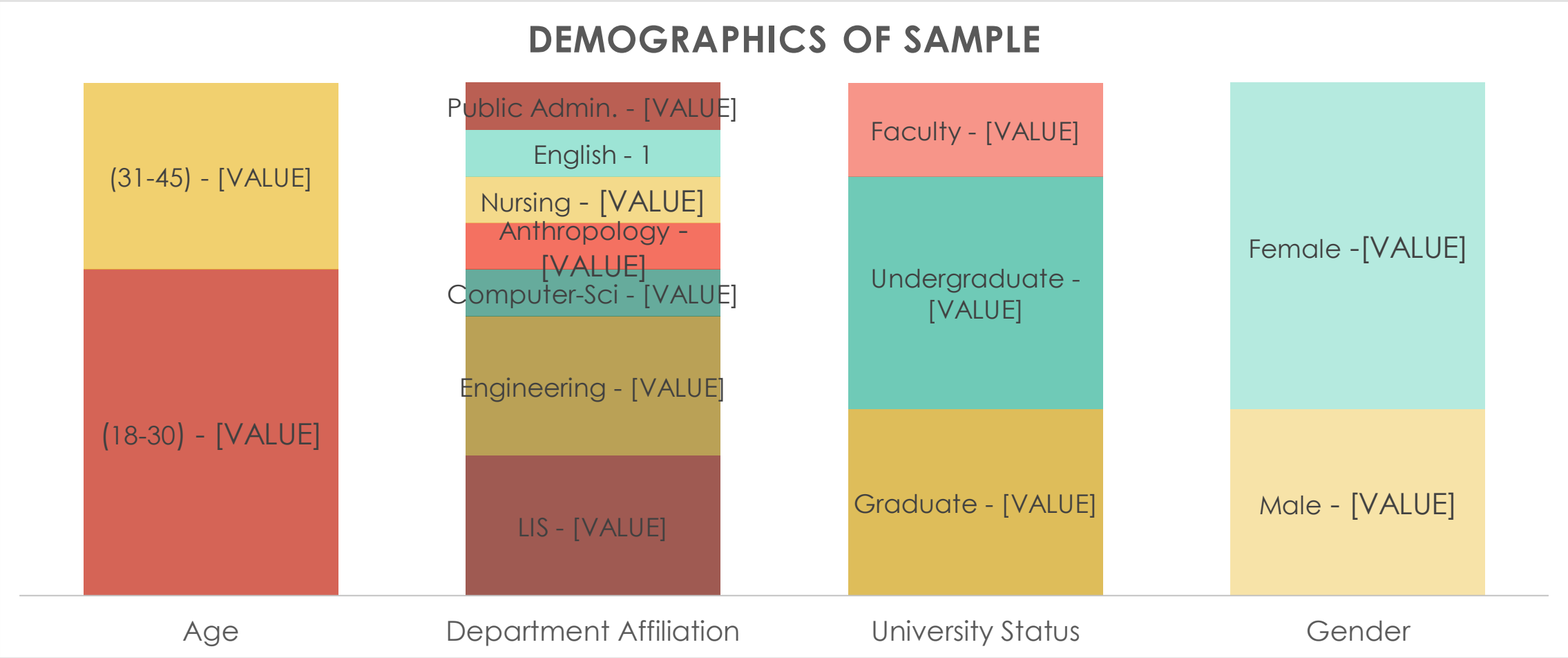


- How do print books figure into your academic life?
- Tell me about the time you read your first e-book?
- What are some pros and cons of reading on-screen?
- When do you find yourself choosing a print book over a digital resource?
- Do you have a preference of devices?
- How would you describe your ideal reading environment?
- Do you identify with reading material?
- Do e-books engage or distract you? Why or why not?

etc...

INTERVIEW PROCESS

STUDY SAMPLE



RESULTS

Themes:

- Comprehension
- Lost (in the reading)
- Willingness to Adapt
- Sentimentality
- Social Interaction
- Space Matters

Familiarity	Distractions	Social	Ownership	Nostalgia	Expense	Accessibility	Approach	Space
Spatial awareness	Hyperlinks	Motivation: forced/free	Collecting Physical	Sentimentality	Cost of device	Note-taking	Efferent	Environment
Linearity	Noise	Convergence theory	Collecting pdfs	Family or other times of life	Cost of book	Ease of access	Aesthetic	Comfort
Tabs	Temperature	Recommendations	Most people only buy physical	environment	Value of physical outweighing cost to buy	Size (of screen)	Using a visual tactic To read	Separation / individual space
Progression / progress	Ability to access other programs	participation	Don't want to give it away if they find it helpful or valuable	fragility	Time?	portability	Memory, Retention	Temperature
Convention	Eye strain	Empathy / understanding		identity		Time	Skimming or in-depth reading "lost" in the reading	
Comfort /discomfort	Comfort /discomfort	exposure		exposure		interactive	learning	
Trust	Concentration	Interests		"lost" in reading		currency	Type of reading: academic vs pleasure	
anthropomorphism	Environment	currency		Emotion		length	convergence	
exposure	Visual aspect					Multi-tasking		
Visual aspect	Time					Convergence		
Identify with	Multi-tasking							

RESULTS – COMPREHENSION



Without understanding it is just information

- Approach (digital – skim, print – deeper reading)
- Time
- Ownership

“To comprehend something fully is to ‘take ownership’ of it, and in order to own a text, I must hold it in my hands, scribble notes in the margins, underline, highlight and star important bits” (Rose, 2011, p.519)
- Visual

RESULTS – LOST (IN THE READING)



- Ideal reading experience and ideal reading environment
- Distractions
 - Eye strain, size of screen, glare, links, other apps, email, social media
- Format doesn't always matter once there is a connection
 - “If I can get my mind focused and not get distracted, I can get lost in reading something electronically and just read it. And in that sense, if you're getting lost in your reading, you're connecting with it because it's engaging you.”

RESULTS – WILLINGNESS TO ADAPT

- Overcoming issues of unfamiliarity
- Spatial Issues: the *feel*, flipping pages
- Examples:
 - Tabbed reading – creates a new type of linearity
 - Choose your own adventure
 - Using linked table of contents
 - Dictionary features
 - Change font size
 - Focus on positive benefits (environment, copy/paste, special features like CTRL-F, portability etc.)
 - Kindle love



RESULTS – SENTIMENTALITY



- Nostalgia: It's in the experience
- Family and upbringing
- Collecting Items: books and pdfs
 - “special space”
 - Worries about her books
 - Not wanting to give them up
- Flipping the pages – familiarity



RESULTS – SOCIAL INTERACTION

- Gain perspective
- Suggestions on sites and also by word of mouth
- Book sharing and exchanging
- Academic pursuits – citations
- Reading together
- “it’s so much more interesting when you can talk about it or you know that they shared the joke or they had the same experience.”
- Builds relationships
- connect with friends and the world
- Broadens your community
- Affects identity



AFFECTING IDENTITY

“I think identity is constructed through the way that we interpret...the way we interpolate text.”

“text and things that we digest, and things that inform our practices do construct our representation...it constructs the mutual space...It constructs this representation; reading constructs the space of mutual intelligibility.”

“It constructs community.”



RESULTS – SPACE MATTERS

Other

Factors:

- Posture
- Division of Space
- Functional
- Aesthetics

Common Factors				Preferred Seating		Library Environment	
Noise	Temperature	Lighting	Dust	Desk/Chair	Couch/Bed	Engaging	Not Engaging
5	2	2	1	9	7	7	4



THE IDEAL READING SPACE

- "Like from my childhood, how comfortable it would have floor-to-ceiling bookshelves, but I like reading on my bed because it's soft and comfortable and I can sit or I can lie down."

"I know, it's really hard sometimes I'll read it a book, Ooh, my ideal reading environment would be a warm sunny day on the beach. I can hear the waves, but the sun is not so bright that you can't see your page, and nobody's bothering you and having the lighting down and you're just lost in saying, "good book."

"hey you need to go to bed." So she can't tell because this image of this reading environment, but I never actually had it. You know those little, library-type chairs, the leather chair with the reading lamp and a little blanket. That's how I want to read, but I've never done it like that. More practically I end up at my desk in a very comfortable chair, I like to have places where I can put things."

SPACE MATTERS - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LIBRARY

- Functional but beautiful when possible
 - Accommodate laptops
 - Good chairs and tables (think posture)
 - Printing concerns
- Communal but personal
 - Division of space
 - Areas for social interactions
- Temperature good for books and people
- Stay aware



CONCLUSIONS

- *Disillusionment and the Phenomenological Process*
 - *It's about the experience*
- *Results support other similar studies*
- *Touch Matters*



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Have you seen examples of these six themes in your libraries or organizations?
- Is there a theme that you would argue against, that it does
- How have you been using your library space to engage and encourage readers?
- Is the tangible still important?
- How do you balance the needs of the physical with the needs of the digital when it comes to reading?
- What other manifestations of connection have you witnessed?

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